

IV. Judicial Branch Strategic Initiatives

JUSTICE FOR THE FUTURE: PLANNING FOR EXCELLENCE | 2019 – 2024

GOAL 1

PROMOTING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Arizona judiciary leads the nation in identifying and implementing best practices to transform the judicial branch from a system designed for judges and lawyers to a system open (and understandable) to all participants, regardless of their financial status, physical limitations, or ability to obtain legal representation. While the judicial branch has made significant improvements in promoting access to our courts, more is needed to ensure equal access to justice for all Arizonans.

When the judicial branch simplifies court processes and procedures, the court system is faster and easier for the public to navigate.

ACTION PLAN

1-A: Access to Justice

1. Continue and expand on the Commission on Access to Justice's work.
 - a. Provide more information to the public through AZCourtHelp.org and azcourts.gov.
 - b. Work with the Foundation for Legal Services and Education and the State Bar of Arizona to improve access to legal services and legal information for individuals with modest incomes.
 - c. Form a workgroup to identify ways to simplify court processes and procedures, making them less costly and more efficient while maximizing use of courts' resources.
2. Evaluate whether online dispute resolution (ODR) pilot projects can be expanded statewide to improve access to justice through technology in such areas as:
 - a. Family court cases (for example, modifications of parenting time and enforcement of child support orders);
 - b. Municipal court cases (for example, misdemeanor pleas); and
 - c. Civil court cases (for example, resolving credit card debt, small claims, traffic citations, and other simple civil matters).
3. Implement the recommendations of the Task Force on the Delivery of Legal Services.
4. Continue and expand efforts to ensure individuals with disabilities of any kind are afforded equal access to our courts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide training for presiding judges and court administrators on methods to eliminate existing or potential barriers experienced by litigants, defendants, or other court participants with disabilities.
1-B: Self-Represented Litigants	<p>We must continue to make the justice system more accessible for individuals who cannot or choose not to obtain legal representation. We can improve accessibility by developing simpler ways to obtain information about court processes and procedures, providing ways to do court business away from the courthouse, and providing additional training for judges and court staff.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand training and resources for effective and appropriate support for self-represented litigants including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Simple, on-demand, internet-based explanations of court and legal processes, including instructional videos explaining court processes for specific types of cases such as small claims, civil collection, and family court; b. On-demand, internet-based tools that allow litigants to conduct more court business away from court buildings, such as interactive and simple court forms with e-submission options; and c. On-demand and in-person educational programs for judges and court staff focused on assisting self-represented litigants.
1-C: Services for Limited English Proficient Litigants, Defendants, and Other Court Participants	<p>We will continue expanding the services available to individuals with limited English language proficiency by increasing access to translated information, forms, and tools available at courthouses and online. Ongoing training will be provided to judges and court staff to ensure they are familiar with language access requirements.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand services for limited English-proficient litigants, defendants, and other court participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide education for the bench and bar on language access requirements and available services. b. Explore opportunities for providing electronic services, such as ODR, in languages other than English. c. Translate vital information provided by forms, web pages, and available videos into languages other than English. 2. Expand the scope of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee to identify and address issues resulting from new requirements courts must meet to provide access to court interpreters.

GOAL 2

PROTECTING CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

The Arizona judiciary has historically placed a high priority on the goal of protecting children, the elderly, families, and communities and will continue several initiatives that advance this important judicial branch responsibility. Specifically, we will continue developing and implementing best practices related to probationer release conditions. We will expand mental health and substance abuse services for probationers and others who enter the criminal and civil justice systems. We will improve our juvenile justice system by reviewing and updating rules, processes, and procedures in child dependency and delinquency cases along with programs for delinquent youth. We will continue efforts to protect families and victims of domestic violence through initiatives to improve the order of protection process and family court case processing. We will continue efforts to address the complexities of probate court rules and processes. Lastly, we will improve our work with community partners to help defendants identify and address issues leading to their involvement in the criminal and civil justice systems.

This agenda continues implementation of the Task Force on Fair Justice for All's recommendations to ensure the court system supports individuals in meeting family and financial obligations while at the same time holding these individuals accountable for violations. This includes expanding use of the pretrial release assessment tool to help courts make pretrial release decisions and using notification tools to assist defendants appearing in court to timely address their cases. We will continue to collaborate with community partners on initiatives addressing mental health and substance abuse issues faced by defendants and their families.

ACTION PLAN

1. Continue refining and developing pretrial release initiatives that help determine release conditions and improve appearance rates.
 - a. Expand the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) to limited jurisdiction courts and help those courts with issues related to implementing the PSA tool.
 - b. Automate scoring and use of the PSA for felonies and misdemeanors.
 - c. Expand the use of text message and other notifications of court events and defendant obligations.
 - d. Continue judicial education of the pretrial release rules and best practices for deciding release conditions and improving appearance rates.
 - e. Implement legislative changes allowing mitigation of financial sentences, use of community restitution, and other options in sentencing.
2. Implement initiatives from the Committee on Mental Health and the Justice System and other initiatives addressing people with mental health issues who have been brought to court.
 - a. Expand access to health care services for probationers and others in both the criminal and civil justice systems by partnering with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and

2-A: Fair Justice Initiatives

other community health providers (sometimes called one-stop medical clinics).

- b. Provide training for presiding judges and other court leaders on best practices for working with community stakeholders to address mentally ill persons in the justice system (i.e., Convening Protocols Project).
- c. Determine if changes are needed to the current standard for requiring involuntary treatment, and seek legislative amendments, as appropriate.
- d. Explore the use of telemedicine/counseling services for adult offenders and their families.
- e. Continue efforts working with executive branch agencies to improve the delivery of appropriate mental health services to defendants and others involved in the criminal and civil justice systems.
- f. Explore additional changes to Rule 11 of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure to identify ways in which court rules governing competency and mental health examinations can be updated, clarified, and improved.

In recent years, the juvenile justice population and the types of programs needed to serve this population have changed. For juvenile offenders, detention has decreased and the need for more community-based programs is growing. We will work to match juveniles to programs best designed to meet their needs and the needs of their families. Similarly, we will seek to improve dependency case processing and case management to ensure courts remain focused on the best interests of the children involved in those cases. In doing so, we will review the current juvenile court rules to identify changes needed to ensure efficient juvenile court case processing and management.

ACTION PLAN

1. Review the Rules of Procedure for the Juvenile Court to identify ways in which court procedures can be restyled, clarified, and improved.
2. Identify ways to:
 - a. Expedite child dependency cases through trial and appellate courts;
 - b. Expedite court processes and procedures for adoptions; and
 - c. Enhance the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) programs by providing opportunities to support trauma-based education and enhancing current business practices.
3. Expand the Dependency Alternative Program to divert families from the dependency system when other protective options are available.

2-B: Juvenile Court

4. Fully implement a statewide juvenile case disposition matrix that combines the current risk/needs Assessment (i.e., Arizona Youth Assessment System, or AZYAS) with severity-of-offense data.
5. Assist juvenile courts with repurposing juvenile detention center space to better serve juveniles within their communities, including implementing a regional drug treatment program in one regional center.
6. Fully implement statewide policies for Crossover Youth Practice Model.
 - a. Evaluate the Crossover Youth Practice Model for expansion to the youthful offender program as well as other programs, such as pretrial, juvenile court, and adult probation.
7. Review current juvenile court financial sanction and assessment practices.
8. Explore the use of telemedicine/counseling to provide mental health services to juvenile offenders and their families under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) guidelines for Treatment Improvement Protocols.
9. Review provider service standards and expectations for treatment of juveniles with sexual abusive behaviors and make recommendations to align with the most current evidence-based practices in the field.
10. Develop medically assisted treatment as the standard of care for opioid-addicted youth.
11. Explore replicating Yavapai County's Milestones program in other counties to help address school violence issues.
12. Implement reporting of felony information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) and establish procedures for notifying juveniles about prohibitions against possessing a firearm after a probation term.
 - a. Work with local courts to ensure processes and procedures are in place for accurate and timely reporting of juvenile dispositions.
13. Produce a training curriculum for juvenile court judges assigned to handle delinquency cases.

2-C: Probation Supervision

In recent years, probation departments have seen a sharp increase in the number of high- risk individuals on probation. These probationers are released from prison to a term of community supervision and are often individuals with chronic drug addictions or mental illness. We will re-evaluate traditional treatment and supervision models to ensure our probation departments provide an appropriate level of supervision and services to this higher risk population of probationers.

ACTION PLAN

1. Re-evaluate probation supervision requirements and procedures to account for high- risk individuals on probation, such as those released from prison and the higher risk populations handled by problem-solving courts.

2-D: Domestic Violence Initiatives

2. Develop treatment options for probation departments to provide to opioid-addicted adults, including medically assisted treatment using telemedicine/counseling.
3. Host regional forums with tribal courts and probation department leadership to identify ways to work together on state-tribal issues affecting probation supervision of both adult and juvenile tribal members.
4. Review national research on best practices for improving juvenile probation supervision, treatment services, and child and family outcomes to determine whether modifications to current services are needed.
 - a. Identify ways to improve parents' participation in juvenile probation services.
 - b. Implement recommendations and standards for courts to collaborate with law enforcement and school districts to improve educational outcomes.

Efforts are underway to modernize the methods by which individuals seek and courts process requests for orders of protection. We will provide judges and court staff with the necessary tools and training to address order of protection and domestic violence issues. We will develop guides for the public and other community partners to better understand and follow the courts' order of protection processes concerning domestic violence issues.

ACTION PLAN

1. Implement the newly required order of protection process allowing for online requests and for courts to electronically send orders to law enforcement for service and to maintain related information in the Court Protective Order Repository (CPOR).
2. Develop and implement new treatment and supervision models, including telemedicine/counseling options, for domestic violence offenders.
3. Provide training, education, and other information for judicial officers and court staff on domestic violence issues.
 - a. Expand the library of bench cards available to judicial officers on protective order processes.
 - b. Develop training and informational resources on relevant domestic violence topics.
 - c. Provide education on full faith and credit and enforcement of tribal court orders; federal and state laws on firearms and Orders of Protection and prohibited possessors.
 - d. Identify ways in which courts can improve access to courts for domestic violence victims.
 - e. Create guides for those who regularly assist with protective orders and for the public.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Work with tribal courts and law enforcement to improve the availability of tribal court orders of protection to law enforcement agencies outside of tribal jurisdiction.
2-E: Family Court	<p>Given the complexity of family court issues, we will provide tools and resources to help individuals and families find necessary assistance and services in an understandable and timely manner. We will develop relevant training for judges and court staff on best practices in resolving issues in high-conflict family court cases.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the redesign or improvement of family court processes. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examine current judicial assignment processes for family court. b. Consider tools, such as a “quick start” guide, to help individuals understand and navigate family court processes. 2. Develop ways to identify high-conflict family law cases involving domestic violence or mental health issues that require special handling and resources. 3. Develop training for judges and staff on handling high-conflict family cases. 4. Identify court and litigant resources needed to address high-conflict family case issues and develop a strategy on obtaining these resources. 5. Evaluate whether courts can better utilize parent education classes to help attendees understand family court processes. 6. Convene a committee of family court stakeholders to make recommendations addressing ongoing issues related to family court case processes and procedures. 7. Establish a committee to review updated economic data for the <i>Schedule of Basic Support Obligations</i>, findings from federally mandated quadrennial <i>Case File Review</i>, and to further study and make recommendations on issues raised by the 2017 Committee for an Interim Review of the Child Support Guidelines.
2-F: Probate Court	<p>The protection of incapacitated and vulnerable individuals is an ongoing priority of the Judicial Branch. Wide-sweeping changes were made in this area nearly a decade ago, but it is important to review the efficacy of the changes and consider other ways to improve and simplify probate court processes, forms and policies.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a task force to review current court processes, policies, and procedures for guardianships and conservatorship cases under the supervision of the probate court.
2-G: Restorative Justice	<p>Many of our local courts face high case volumes driven by underlying social problems such as homelessness, mental illness, and other social issues. The expanded availability of specialty courts, along with expanded collaborative efforts with our community partners, is essential in ensuring the right services are available</p>

and provided at the right time to those in need. When courts and communities work to provide defendants the clinical support needed to resolve the underlying social circumstances that may have contributed to their criminal behavior, those communities can begin to heal both the offender and the victim.

ACTION PLAN

1. Identify best practices for restorative justice programs and establish ways to expand access to such programs in courthouses and in communities.
2. Identify opportunities to expand and support specialty courts addressing homelessness, veterans' issues, mental illness, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol abuse.

2-H: Criminal Justice Reform

It is important for the judicial branch to remain aware of criminal justice reform discussions and initiatives within the executive and legislative branches. When appropriate, the judicial branch must participate in those discussions and provide information to help the other branches make informed policy and legislative decisions.

ACTION PLAN

1. Provide information to executive branch agencies and legislative committees regarding criminal justice reform.

GOAL 3

PROMOTING JUDICIAL BRANCH EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

The goal of promoting judicial branch excellence and innovation requires continuing our examination of court operations at all levels to identify what we can do differently or better to achieve greater efficiencies and outcomes. This effort requires accurate data and the tools necessary for leadership to understand and use data to inform decision making. Where we can, we should address any real or perceived disparities in processes and practices and incorporate effective case management tools and practices for court decision-making and daily court operations. We must examine our existing practices, and we should continue to innovate new approaches to streamline, simplify, and enhance our services and programs.

3-A: Data-Based Decision Making

To effectively manage court processes and programs, we need to ensure judges and court managers have the tools to efficiently and effectively perform their duties. The data we collect is vital to helping direct the best course of action in individual cases as well as overall court processes and policies. We need to identify key data both judges and court managers find most useful in performing their caseload and oversight functions. We need to ensure this data is accurate and readily available to make informed operations and policy decisions.

ACTION PLAN

1. Establish a workgroup to identify the types of court data judges and court managers need to effectively and efficiently manage cases.
 - a. Develop goals for the use of data for decision-making purposes.
2. Use technology to provide court management tools that assemble and present the data necessary to make informed policy and business-related decisions.

3-B: Civil Justice Reform

Recent innovative changes to civil case processing rules designed to streamline dispute resolution will be evaluated to determine the impact on litigants as well as on timeliness and cost. We will expand these new processes and procedures statewide and, as needed, make adjustments to achieve these goals.

ACTION PLAN

1. Measure and evaluate the impact of new civil justice reform rules, including the commercial court rules, on case processing timeliness, cost of litigation, and litigant satisfaction.
2. Evaluate results from Pima County's Fast Trials and Alternative Resolution (FASTAR) pilot project and rules that make it easier and quicker to process small cases, and consider expanding FASTAR statewide.

3-C: Case Management

Our courts' ability to efficiently and effectively manage cases is essential for the ongoing success of the judicial branch. We must continue emphasizing and incorporating a variety of approaches, including training and identification of best practices, as well as updating the tools available to judges to assist them in case management and decision-making. This may include use of emerging technology, such as business intelligence tools, which will make it easier for judges and court administrators to more readily measure court performance and identify areas in need of improvement.

ACTION PLAN

1. Provide leadership and judicial officer training on principles of and the judicial role in case management.
2. Rewrite judicial officer bench books to reflect changes in civil and criminal rules, particularly after civil rules reforms.
3. Strive to assure that each court adopts and follows case management practices and processes that constitute best practices for that particular court (i.e., appellate, general jurisdiction, or limited jurisdiction).
4. Improve the accuracy of court data by training court deputy clerks and staff, auditing data accuracy, and identifying data needs for effective court management.
5. Investigate the availability and applicable use of business intelligence tools to measure court and caseflow performance.
6. Address modifications to the Arizona Rules of Probate Procedure to allow:
 - a. Tracking subsequent petitions in routine (true) probate and mental health cases; and
 - b. Tracking non-probate cases that are filed within, or consolidated with, a probate case.
7. Review the current system for capital cases to identify needed changes to statutes, rules, and processes and procedures.

3-D: Court Governance

To achieve a cohesive judicial system, it is important that judges and court administrators at all levels are confident in providing and receiving information and input from the Supreme Court and its administrative office. With this agenda, we will examine our current governance structure and identify any improvements that may be needed to help ensure the judicial system is more responsive to the judges and court staff regardless of court size and resources.

ACTION PLAN

1. Explore whether changes are needed to court governance structure, oversight, and level of assistance provided to local courts in addressing local issues.
2. Consider ways to better facilitate the transfer of information from superior courts and limited jurisdiction courts that will help court leadership get an early understanding of developing problems, and to work on local solutions.

3-E: Supreme Court Commissions

Just as we look to identify improvements and innovation in everyday court practices, it is time to similarly examine other judicial branch activities, such as judicial performance review, judicial conduct review, and bar exams oversight.

ACTION PLAN

1. Review key Commission rules to ensure compliance with existing laws and procedures and examine opportunities for improvement and transparency to the:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Judicial Performance Review Commission Rules of Procedure and operating policies; b. Commission on Judicial Conduct rules and procedures; and c. Committee on Bar Exams grading policies and procedures.
3-F: Technology Initiatives	<p>The courts face increasing public expectations to conduct business using technology. These expectations, with the rapid pace of technological change and emerging new technologies, require a constant effort to implement and update systems and programs to meet both the needs of our customers and judicial officers and staff. Technological needs in the courts range from expanding electronic access to services and documents, to completing the rollout and development of new case management systems, to providing additional system functionality and technological tools for courts across the state. In doing so, delivering information technology securely has become necessary for maintaining an environment of trust. We will continue enhancing court technology and processes to protect the courts, as well as the government agencies and the public that access court information, from ever-increasing cybersecurity threats.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance case management system functionality and identify other technology tools to assist judges and court administrators in more efficiently and effectively managing cases, such as calculating the date when a judge needs to set the next hearing, identifying unnecessary hearings or other delays, and to ensuring decisions are made within time standards. 2. Expand e-filing services to probate and family court cases and establish other case types eligible for e-filing. 3. Implement e-Access services, allowing public access to court records online. 4. Implement a new appellate court case management system. 5. Update the Supreme Court rules forum website to provide easier access and navigation for the public, courts, and attorneys. 6. Finish the rollout of the AJACS-LJ case management system for limited jurisdiction courts. 7. Adopt digital evidence management standards for courts. 8. Explore options and secure funding to maintain and support our existing technology infrastructure. 9. Explore the expansion of technology used in larger court jurisdictions to other jurisdictions (for example, remote appearances by litigants, defendants, and victims seeking protective orders). 10. Provide probation officers with technology that improves their efficiency and effectiveness in performing offender supervision.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Explore emerging technologies, such as augmented intelligence, data mining, and predictive/data analytics, to determine whether courts will benefit from their use and the impact on courts incorporating these technologies into their business practices. 12. Integrate data from Maricopa County’s iCIS case management system into the JOLTSaz case management system to create a fully statewide juvenile justice data repository. 13. Continue efforts addressing cybersecurity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrate older automation systems into newer platforms that better manage security risks. b. Work closely with state and local governments to ensure that shared data, technology, and facilities are secure. c. Continue to enhance training and processes within the courts to prevent security breaches.
3-G: Keeping the Record	<p>With a growing shortage of qualified court reporters at both the state and national level, courts are faced with the ever-increasing challenge of keeping an accurate record of court proceedings. Through emerging innovations, including digital recording and remote court reporting, we will take necessary steps to ensure courts continue to create a complete and accurate record for each and every case.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modernize statutes, rules, and the administrative code permitting courts to create and maintain a complete and accurate court record electronically to supplement court reporters and to reduce the time needed to produce a record and transcript for cases on appeal.
3-H: Court Safety and Security	<p>Our courthouses, the primary locations for addressing and resolving often emotionally tense disputes, must remain safe places. We will continue implementing court security standards, identifying safety and security needs in our probation offices across the state, and considering other opportunities to further improve and enhance courthouse security.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue implementing court security standards. 2. Review the security needs of probation offices and determine whether separate security standards and additional training programs are needed. 3. Consider ways to address violence in the courts, violence by litigants, and violence directed at court participants. 4. Create a committee to identify best practices to ensure the safe handling of toxic substances (such as fentanyl), as well as drugs laced with toxic substances, as evidence in the courtroom.

GOAL 4

ENHANCING PROFESSIONALISM WITHIN ARIZONA'S COURTS

While education and leadership development have been a longstanding area of excellence and innovation in our judicial branch, we must continue refining our efforts to maintain a high level of service and professionalism throughout the court system.

4-A: Judicial Branch Leadership

Developing effective leadership skills among our current and future court leaders is essential to maintaining the Arizona judicial branch's reputation as an innovator in court programs and practices.

ACTION PLAN

1. Develop leadership-judge and leadership-team training.
2. Develop a Senior Executive Leadership program.

4-B: Judicial Officer Excellence

To develop and maintain a strong core of judicial officers, we must ensure that judges who are newer to the bench receive ongoing training and development opportunities. We will use our more experienced judges to share their knowledge, courtroom experience, and best practices to provide new judges with the information and tools they need to effectively manage trials and caseflow.

ACTION PLAN

1. Establish a trial judge training academy.

4-C: Workforce Development

To ensure we provide a high level of service to the public with professionalism, integrity, accuracy, and timeliness, we must ensure court personnel possess the requisite skills and tools to perform their jobs and fulfill their responsibilities.

ACTION PLAN

1. Update the probation officer certification academy curriculum to ensure the most current evidence-based practices are taught.
2. Continue offering judicial officer training in specialty areas as new topics arise and when updated material is available for existing specialty training topics.
3. Develop a court security officer certification program, officer arming requirements, and weapons training.
4. Continue providing training on diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias to judicial officers and court employees.
5. Provide quality interpreters in the court system through training and continuing to certify court interpreters.
6. Identify ways to develop and retain court employees.
 - a. Explore the feasibility and benefits of periodically compiling compensation and classification studies conducted for local

	<p>jurisdictions to provide presiding judges with comparative information that may be helpful when seeking updated classifications and salaries.</p> <p>7. Identify ways to expand training opportunities for clerks of court and their staff, as well as limited jurisdiction court staff.</p>
<p>4-C: Culturally Diverse Bench and Workforce</p>	<p>Though continually focused on the need for our courts to reflect the communities they serve, we acknowledge more can be done to encourage and develop a bench and workforce that is culturally diverse.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase diversity of judicial officers and court staff by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Developing opportunities to encourage minority attorneys to seek judicial branch careers (for example, law student outreach, and the Chris Nakamura Judicial Appointment Workshop); and b. Offering court leadership planning with a focus on diversity.
<p>4-D: Judicial Officer, Staff, and Legal Community Well-Being</p>	<p>All too often, courts deal with cases involving tragic consequences. Not only do these cases impact the victims and their families, but judicial officers and court staff are similarly exposed to traumatic events on a routine basis. The impact of this untreated vicarious trauma can affect court-personnel interactions with victims and the public; it also impacts the wellness and productivity of the workforce. Efforts to provide trauma-informed training must be expanded within the courts as well as among the legal community.</p> <p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer opportunities for judges and court staff to address vicarious trauma resulting from handling court cases. 2. Support State Bar of Arizona efforts to address well-being in the legal profession, including pursuing the American Bar Association's (ABA) recommendations regarding The Path to Lawyer Well-Being.

GOAL 5

PROMOTING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The more the judicial branch can do to inform the public about the role of courts, their place in our communities, and the importance of understanding and participating in the judicial process, the more we can promote the public's trust and confidence in a judicial system that is fair, just, and accessible to all.

5-A: Public Awareness

The judicial branch is committed to ongoing public awareness efforts to reach all Arizonans to educate and demonstrate how courts operate and the important role courts serve in our society. In doing so, we will continue efforts to partner with educators to promote civic education, bring court proceedings to local communities, and provide information about other court programs, such as judicial performance review.

ACTION PLAN

1. Communicate effectively with the public about the role of courts in a free society, how courts serve our communities, and progress in achieving this agenda's goals.
2. Promote civic education by supporting programs such as "We the People," Mock Trial, Our Courts AZ, and iCivics; partnering with teachers and others in the education community; and conducting appellate arguments in local schools and other community locations.
3. Use juror "downtime" to provide prospective jurors with information about the role of courts and public involvement in the justice system.

5-B: Public Trust and Confidence

While informing the public about the role of courts, it is particularly important we identify and address concerns or issues that may affect the public's trust and confidence in our justice system.

ACTION PLAN

1. Evaluate efforts by the National Center of State Courts and the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System to identify and address public trust in the courts, particularly among minority and low-income communities, and identify those efforts which would be beneficial for Arizona courts and local communities.
2. Develop a rapid response plan to improve the judicial branch's ability to counter attempts at spreading misinformation or undermining the public's confidence in the judicial process.
3. Improve the dissemination of Judicial Performance Review information to the public.
4. Examine and address issues regarding disproportionate minority contact with the justice system.

5-C: Jury Service

Many citizens are asked to perform their civic duty of jury service. We need to make sure everyone who is eligible to serve on a jury fully understands the importance of his or her time and service in this essential court function.

ACTION PLAN

1. Communicate to the public the importance of jury service.
2. Work with a production company to produce a program about jury service and deliberation.